

	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
1	BRS	L1	60244	(ship or shipping or mail or mailing or address) near5 (label or labeled or labeling or tape or form)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:54
2	BRS	L2	38261	return near5 (label or labeled or labeling or tape or form)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:54
3	BRS	L3	8074	(1 or 2) near5 (create or created or creating or creation or generate or generated or generating or generation or make or making or print or printed or printing or produce or produced or producing or production)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:54
4	BRS	L4	642	3 near5 (customer or purchase or purchaser or purchasing or buyer or buying or order or ordered or ordering or orderer)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:55
5	BRS	L5	1514	3 near5 (product or item or merchandise or content or container or box or package or packaging or envelope or piece)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:55
6	BRS	L6	98	2 and (4 and 5) <i>Scanned Ti, Ab, Kwic all</i>	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 12:56
7	BRS	L7	6	((@pd<="19710101" not @pd<="19470101") and (705/401 or 705/407 or 705/408 or 705/410).ccls.) <i>Scanned Ti all</i>	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2005/02/06 13:06

	Document ID	Issue Date	Inventor	Current OR	Current XRef	Pages
1	US 5315508 A	19940524	Bain; James M. et al.	705/28	700/90; 705/1	71
2	US 5520990 A	19960528	Rotermund; Ralph W.	428/195.1	281/5; 283/105; 283/81; 428/174; 428/187; 428/42.1; 428/48; 428/537.5	7
3	US 6244763 B1	20010612	Miller; Christopher Patrick	400/76	400/61; 400/70	14
4	US 20020010689 A1	20020124	Tibbs, Andrew et al.	705/408		17
5	US 20020032612 A1	20020314	Williams, Daniel F. et al.	705/26	705/27	153
6	EP 1209598 A2	20020529	SANSONE, RONALD P et al.			15
7	US 20020152093 A1	20021017	Chalmers, Geoff S. et al.	705/1		32
8	US 6547136 B1	20030415	Sansone; Ronald P.	235/385	235/375	21
9	US 6714922 B1	20040330	Sansone; Ronald P. et al.	705/406	705/404; 705/408; 705/410	14

76 results

PUB-NO: EP001209598A2
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: EP 1209598 A2
TITLE: Method for returning merchandise
PUBN-DATE: May 29, 2002
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:
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INT-CL (IPC): G06F017/60, G09F003/02
EUR-CL (EPC): G06F017/60 ; G09F003/02

ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=20020702 STATUS=O> A Merchandise Return Label may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the Merchandise Return Label will be considered metered mail. Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package. <IMAGE>

US-PAT-NO: 5520990

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5520990 A

TITLE: Shipping label

DATE-ISSUED: May 28, 1996

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
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US-CL-CURRENT: 428/195.1, 281/5 , 283/105 , 283/81 , 428/174 , 428/187 , 428/42.1 , 428/48 , 428/537.5

ABSTRACT: A shipping label is provided for use by a first party to prepare a shipping container for delivery to a second party, and thereafter by the second party to return the shipping container to the first party. The shipping label includes a return label, the back surface of which is attachable to the shipping container. The address of the first party is printed on the front surface of the return label. The shipping label also includes an initial address label, the back surface of which is releasably secured to the front surface of the return label, thereby at least partially covering the return label. The address of the second party is imprinted on the front surface of the initial address label. The shipping label is affixed to the shipping container by the first party to facilitate delivery of the shipping container to the address of the second party indicated on the initial address label. The second party can, after receiving the shipping container, peel off the initial address label from the return label, thereby exposing the return label, which remains affixed to the shipping container to facilitate delivery of the shipping container to the first party.

19 Claims, 4 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 3

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Abstract Text - ABTX (1): A shipping label is provided for use by a first party to prepare a shipping container for delivery to a second party, and thereafter by the second party to return the shipping container to the first party. The shipping label includes a return label, the back surface of which is attachable to the shipping container. The address of the first party is printed on the front surface of the return label. The shipping label also includes an initial address label, the back surface of which is releasably secured to the front surface of the return label, thereby at least partially covering the return label. The address of the second party is imprinted on the front surface of the initial address label. The shipping label is affixed to the shipping container by the first party to facilitate delivery of the shipping container to the address of the second party indicated on the initial address label. The second party can, after receiving the shipping container, peel off the initial address label from the return label, thereby exposing the return label, which remains affixed to the shipping container to facilitate delivery of the shipping container to the first party.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (5): One object of the present invention is to provide a shipping label that can be used both by an original shipper to send a carton to a recipient and by the recipient to return the carton to the shipper wherein a pre-addressed label is provided on the carton for the return delivery to the shipper. Brief Summary Text - BSTX (9): A shipping label in accordance with the present invention may be used by an original shipper to prepare a shipping container for delivery to an intended recipient, and thereafter by the recipient to return the shipping container to the original shipper, if necessary. The shipping label includes a return label, the back surface of which is attachable to the shipping container. The front surface of the return label is pre-addressed to indicate the address of the original shipper. The shipping label also includes an initial address label, the back surface of which is releasably secured to the front surface of the return label, thereby at least partially covering the return label. The address of the intended recipient is imprinted on the front surface of the initial address label.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (10): In use, the shipping label is affixed to the shipping container by the original shipper to prepare the container for delivery to the address of the intended recipient, which has been printed on the initial address label. The recipient can, after receiving the shipping container, peel off the initial address label from the return label, thereby exposing the return label, which remains affixed to the shipping container to facilitate delivery of the shipping container back to the original shipper. Since the return label has been pre-addressed to the shipper, the recipient need not mark the container to indicate a new delivery address.

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (5): FIG. 4 is a top view of a portion of the shipping label comprising a return shipping label and an advisory postcard.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (2): FIGS. 1-3 are top, bottom and cross-section views, respectively, of a shipping label 10 in accordance with the present invention. The label 10 comprises an initial address label 12 releasably secured to a sheet 14 comprising a return label 16 and an advisory postcard 18.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (4): A window or cut-out portion 28 extends through a portion of the left side of the initial address label 12 to expose an area 30 on the return label 16 at which the address of the initial sender can be imprinted. The word "From" is imprinted on the initial address label 12 adjacent the window 28 to indicate the address therein as being the return address of the sender.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (6): As shown in FIG. 4, the sheet 14 includes the return label 16 and the advisory postcard 18, and it preferably comprises 75 pound high-bulk postcard stock or other stock meeting postal regulations for postcards. At opposite ends of the sheet 12 are removable margins, 34, 36, which may include openings 38 therein adapted to be engaged by a printer sprocket wheel (not shown) to facilitate feeding the label 10 through a printer (not shown). The margins 34, 36 may be removed by a user along perforation lines 40, 42, respectively.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (8): The postcard 18 includes an area 48, at which the name and address of the intended recipient of the card is pre-printed. The postcard 18 also includes an area 50, at which the sender of the card may affix a postage stamp. Although not shown, the postcard 18 may comprise a business reply mail card, in which postage has been pre-paid by the intended postcard recipient. The postcard 18 may be separated from the return label 16 along perforation line 52.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (9): The return label 16 includes the area 30 at which the address of the original shipping location is imprinted. The area 30 is aligned with the window 28 in the initial address label 12 such that the address therein is exposed through the initial address label 12. The address on the return label 16 and that on the postcard 18 will normally be different as the postcard will usually be sent to an accounting or invoicing center of the original shipper and the return label will be usually sent with the shipping carton to the original shipping warehouse location.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (10): Instructions for use of the return label 16 may be provided at an area 56. The return label 16 also includes an area 58 at which the sender of the return label may write-in his or her name and return address.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (11): Bar codes 60, 62 or other optically readable marks, characters or symbols may be laser imaged on the return label 16 and on the postcard 18 to provide customer and/or order information to facilitate outgoing shipment tabulation and reconciliation of returned merchandise with customer accounts. The bar codes on the return label and the postcard will normally be the same, but may be varied as needed. As shown in FIG. 1, the bar codes 60, 62 are not covered by the initial address label 12 and are exposed in the top view of the label 10.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (14): The back surface of the return label 16 is coated with pressure-sensitive adhesive to render the return label self-adhesive. A release backing sheet 66 is provided for covering the adhesive coated back surface.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (15): The shipping label 10 may be used, for example, by a merchandiser for shipping a carton to a customer. The merchandiser initially has available for use a plurality of labels 10 prepared by a label manufacturer. In each label, the merchandiser's invoicing or accounting address has been pre-printed in area 48 of the postcard 18. The shipping address of the merchandiser may also have been pre-printed in area 30 of the return label 16, although this address may be subsequently computer imprinted by the merchandiser.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (16): After a customer has placed a merchandise order, the label 10 is fed through a printer and the customer's name and address are printed in area 24 of the initial label 12. Bar codes 60, 62 may, at the same time, be laser imaged on the postcard 18 and return label 16 at areas not covered by the initial label 12. The merchandiser's shipping address may also be printed in the area 30 of the return label if this address has not already been pre-printed by the label manufacturer.

After removal from the printer, the margins 34, 36 at the edges of the label 10 may be torn off at perforation lines 40, 42, respectively.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (17): The label 10 can then be affixed to the shipping carton or container (not shown). First, the release backing sheet 66 on the back surface 64 of the return label 16 is peeled off to expose the adhesive coated back surface of return label, which is then adhered to the shipping carton thereby securing the left side or return label side of the label 10 to the shipping carton. Next, the right side of the initial address label 12 extending over the longitudinal strip 44 is lifted off the strip 44. The strip 44, which is now exposed, is then separated from the postcard 18 along from perforation line 46. The right side of the label 10 is then adhered to the carton by pressing the exposed portion of the back surface 22 of the initial address label 12, which has an adhesive coating thereon, onto the shipping carton. The label 10 can thus be securely affixed to the carton at both ends of the label. The merchandiser can then provide the carton to the post office or a delivery service for shipment to the customer.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (18): If, after receiving the carton and inspecting the merchandise therein, the customer decides to return some or all of the merchandise, he or she can use the label 10 to easily prepare the same shipping carton for delivery to the merchandiser. The customer first peels off the initial shipping label 12 from the sheet 14, thereby exposing the postcard 18 and the return label 16. The postcard is then detached from the return label along perforation line 52. The customer can fill in any information requested on the back of the postcard, stamp the postcard and mail it to the merchandiser. As previously noted, the postcard 18 is pre-addressed to the invoicing or accounting department of the merchandiser. Upon receipt of the postcard, the merchandiser can provide immediate credit to the customer's account or take some other action.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (19): The return label 16 remains affixed to the carton and is pre-addressed at 30 with the warehouse or shipping address of the merchandiser. The customer may fill in his or her return address in the area 58 of the label. The shipping carton can then be provided to the post office or a delivery service for delivery to the merchandiser.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (21): If the merchandiser wants returned goods to be sent to a single return location all the time, the label 10 may be modified to eliminate the window 28 in the initial address label 12. The initial shipping address of the merchandiser can thus be pre-printed on the initial label 12 as the "From" address. The merchandise return address can be printed on the return label 16 such that it is covered by the initial label 12.

Claims Text - CLTX (2): a return label having opposite front and back surfaces, wherein said back surface is attachable to the shipping container, and said address of said first party is imprinted on said front surface;

Claims Text - CLTX (3): an initial address label having opposite front and back surfaces, wherein the address of the second party may be imprinted on said front surface, said back surface being releasably secured to the front surface of said return label to partially cover the front surface of said return label with a portion of said return label being exposed such that said portion can be imaged with machine readable indicia, wherein said initial address label can be removed from said return label to expose said return label for preparing said shipping container for delivery to the address of said first party; and

Claims Text - CLTX (4): a pre-addressed advisory postcard comprising postcard stock adjacent and removably affixed to said return label, wherein said initial address label is releasably secured to said postcard and at least partially covers said postcard.

Claims Text - CLTX (5): 2. The shipping label of claim 1, wherein said initial label includes a window extending therethrough to expose said address of said first party indicated on said return label as a return address.

Claims Text - CLTX (10): 7. The shipping label of claim 1, wherein said front surface of said return label is at least partially coated with silicone and said back surface of said initial address label is at least partially coated with an adhesive to releasably secure the initial address label to the return label.

Claims Text - CLTX (11): 8. The shipping label of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the back surface of the return label is coated with a pressure-sensitive adhesive, and wherein the shipping label further comprises a release backing for covering the back surface of the return label.

Claims Text - CLTX (12): 9. The shipping label of claim 1, further comprising a strip adjacent and detachably secured to said return label, and wherein at least a portion of said initial label extends over and is releasably secured to at least a portion of said strip.

Claims Text - CLTX (14): a return label having opposite front and back surfaces, wherein said back surface is attachable to the shipping container, and said address of said first party is indicated on the front surface of said return label; and

Claims Text - CLTX (15): an initial address label having opposite front and back surfaces, wherein the address of the second party is imprinted on said front surface, said initial address label partially covering the front surface of said return label and including a window extending therethrough for exposing a portion of the return label having the address of the first party indicated thereon, wherein said initial address label can be lifted off said return label, thereby exposing said return label to prepare said shipping container for delivery to the address of said first party,

Claims Text - CLTX (16): said back surface of said initial address label being releasably secured to the front surface of said return label.

Claims Text - CLTX (17): 11. The shipping label of claim 10, further comprising a pre-addressed advisory postcard adjacent and removably affixed to said return label and said initial address label is releasably secured to said postcard and at least partially covers said postcard.

Claims Text - CLTX (19): 13. The shipping label of claim 11, wherein said postcard and said return label comprise high-bulk postcard stock.

Claims Text - CLTX (20): 14. The shipping label of claim 11, wherein said postcard and said return label each include bar codes thereon for facilitating outgoing shipment tabulation and reconciliation of returned shipments.

Claims Text - CLTX (22): 16. The shipping label of claim 10, further comprising a silicone coating on at least a portion of the front surface of said return label and an adhesive coating on at least a portion of the back surface of the initial address label.

Claims Text - CLTX (23): 17. The shipping label of claim 10, wherein at least a portion of the back surface of the return label is coated with a pressure-sensitive adhesive to make the shipping label self-adhesive.

Claims Text - CLTX (24): 18. A method of using a two-way shipping label for preparing a shipping container for delivery from a first address to a second address and then for delivery from the second address back to the first address, said shipping label comprising a return label having opposite front and back surfaces, said front surface being pre-addressed with said first address; and an initial address label having opposite front and back surfaces, said back surface of said initial label being releasably secured to the front surface of the return label, said method comprising:

Claims Text - CLTX (25): printing the second address on the front surface of the initial label, and attaching the back surface of the return label to the shipping container to prepare the container for delivery to said second address; and

Claims Text - CLTX (26): after receipt of said container at said second address, removing said initial address label from the return label to expose the front surface of the return label to prepare the container for delivery to said first address.

Claims Text - CLTX (27): 19. The method of claim 18, wherein said shipping label further comprises an advisory postcard having an address indicated thereon, said postcard being adjacent and removably affixed to said return label, and wherein said initial address label is releasably secured to said postcard and at least partially covers said postcard, and wherein said method further comprises the steps of removing said initial label from said postcard after receipt of said container at said second address and thereafter sending the postcard to the address indicated thereon.

US-PAT-NO: 6244763

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6244763 B1

See image for Certificate of Correction

TITLE: PC postage label containing three primary labels for indicia, sender and recipient and method for printing same

DATE-ISSUED: June 12, 2001

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Miller; Christopher Patrick	Aliso Viejo	CA	N/A	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 400/76, 400/61, 400/70

ABSTRACT: A sheet having at least one self-adhesive special purpose label arrangement set having a postage indicia label, an addressee label, and a sender label, wherein the maximum printable area of the sheet is made available for the labels, and a process for printing these special purpose label arrangement sets. In the process, a computer system with a printer is provided. A postage computer program for preparing and printing the labels is provided, and information concerning the addressee, the sender, and a mail piece to be mailed and how it is to be mailed is inputted into the postage computer program. The postage computer software will interface with and direct the printer to print the label set with the postage indicia, the addressee information, and sender information, preferably in a single pass through the printer. The postage value can be obtained via the Internet or in other manners.

40 Claims, 6 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 6

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Abstract Text - ABTX (1): A sheet having at least one self-adhesive special purpose label arrangement set having a postage indicia label, an addressee label, and a sender label, wherein the maximum printable area of the sheet is made available for the labels, and a process for printing these special purpose label arrangement sets. In the process, a computer system with a printer is provided. A postage computer program for preparing and printing the labels is provided, and information concerning the addressee, the sender, and a mail piece to be mailed and how it is to be mailed is inputted into the postage computer program. The postage computer software will interface with and direct the printer to print the label set with the postage indicia, the addressee information, and sender information, preferably in a single pass through the printer. The postage value can be obtained via the Internet or in other manners.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (4): The United States Postal Service (USPS) has responded to recent technological developments in the telecommunication and computer field by developing its Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP.) The IBIP involves the development of new technology to produce new forms of postage. In so-called PC Postage, a user can purchase postage credit, and print the postage in the form of PC Postage onto a label or directly onto the mail piece. The PCT Postage includes a human

readable portion and a 2-dimensional barcode portion. The human readable portion includes the postage value, mail class, the date, and optionally a logo. The barcode portion is intended to help thwart fraud, and includes information about the mail piece including the destination ZIP code, the amount of postage applied, the date and time the postage was applied, and a digital signature so that the USPS can validate the authenticity of the postage.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (8): E-Stamp.com's Internet Postage starter kit includes samples of self-adhesive labels from Avery.RTM. identified as Postage & Address Labels #2869 and #2866, and labels for template #2859. These label sheets include the words "Patent Pending". The #2866 labels consist of single enlarged labels with fluorescent strips on the top and right side edges. The #2866 label design is stated as being large enough to print postage and addresses on labels for packages. The #2859 and #2869 labels consist of two labels per set, with fluorescent strips on the top and right side edges of the upper and larger label in each of the two labels per set. The larger upper label in these sets is for the postage indicia, and the smaller label is for the addressee. There is no provision for printing of the sender's address along with the postage indicia label and addressee label.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (9): As noted above, the postage indicia includes such information as the destination ZIP code. It would be highly useful to have a special purpose label arrangement that has a label portion for the postage indicia, an addressee label portion, and a sender label portion, so that during the printing of postage indicia onto a self-adhesive label, additional labels for the addressee and sender can also be simultaneously printed by the user, as a set, thereby eliminating the need to print sender labels in a separate step. Furthermore, since some users include additional unique identifying information along with mail piece, (such as account numbers), which can be placed in the vicinity of the sender's address on the mail piece, it would be beneficial to print all three labels in a single step.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (12): This postage value can be obtained in blocks and stored on the user's computer or a device attached to the computer, or can be downloaded as needed (e.g. 33.cent. at a time). The user will indicate the style of label sheet being used (e.g. that of FIG. 1, 2, 3, or some other style of label sheet) and the set number (e.g. top right set) be printed. In another step, the user will input the addresses information (e.g. from a document being typed, from information directly entered into the postage software, from the address book or database of another program, or in some other manner.) The correct postage value for the postage indicia label takes into consideration the sender's address, the destination address, the type of mail service to be used, and the weight and/or size of the postal piece being mailed. An optional electronic scale 92 connected to the computer system 80 can be used to automatically provide the mailing piece's weight. The user may wish to print a return address label, which may be the sender's primary return address or some other address (e.g. an address for billing purposes, an address for customer service, etc.) Other information can also be printed onto the sender's label including, for example, a billing or account code. Some parts of the return address information, or other information

identifying the user, such as origin zip code and origin city can be contained on the postage indicia label. Accordingly, there is a considerable amount of coordination required between the different data, the different software, and the label attributes in order to properly print the label sets. The specialized computer program will then direct the printer to print the postage indicia label, the addressee label, and the sender label of the correct set (e.g. the middle left set) of the special purpose label arrangement set, preferably in a single pass through the printer. The ordering of the above described steps is not critical, and could be varied.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (14): The postage value can be obtained in blocks and stored on the user's computer or a device attached to the computer, or can be obtained as needed. The user will indicate the style of label sheet being used (e.g. that of FIG. 1, 2, 3, or some other style of label sheet) and the set number (e.g. top right set) be printed. In another step, the user will input the addresses information (e.g. from a document being typed, from information directly entered into the postage software, from the address book or database of another program, or in some other manner.) The correct postage value for the postage indicia label takes into consideration the sender's address, the destination address, the type of mail service to be used, and the weight and/or size of the postal piece being mailed. An optional electronic scale connected to the computer system 106 can be used to automatically provide the mailing piece's weight. The user may wish to print a return address label, which may be the sender's primary return address or some other address (e.g. an address for billing purposes, an address for customer service, etc.) Other information can also be printed onto the sender's label including, for example, a billing or account code. Some parts of the return address information, or other information identifying the user, such as origin zip code and origin city can be contained on the postage indicia label. Accordingly, there is a considerable amount of coordination required between the different data, the different software, and the label attributes in order to properly print the label sets. The computer program will then direct the printer to print the postage indicia label, the addressee label, and the sender label of the correct set (e.g. the middle left set) of the special purpose label arrangement set to form completed label set 108, which may preferably occur in a single pass through printer 102. The ordering of the above described steps is not critical, and could be varied.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (15): FIG. 5. is a top plan view showing a sheet of self-adhesive labels 40 of the invention after one set 42 of the three labels 44, 46 and 48 is printed with the postage indicia 94, addressee information 96, and sender information 98. Since set 42 is printed in a single pass through printer 82, the method provides an ideal method to print all labels necessary to send a mail piece with the postage indicia.

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20020032612

PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020032612 A1

TITLE: Apparatus, systems and methods for online, multi-parcel, multi-carrier, multi-service parcel returns shipping management

PUBLICATION-DATE: March 14, 2002

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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Meyer, Scott	Woodinville	WA	US	
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Antush, Richard M.	Preston	WA	US	
Bean, Scott Joseph	Seattle	WA	US	

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/26, 705/27

ABSTRACT: The present invention provides a computer system (the "System", or the "Return System") that is configured and programmed to provide online stores with a fast, simple, convenient way for eCommerce customers of an online store to return merchandise purchased from that store from within that online store. The Return System provides multi-carrier shipment rating, shipment labeling, shipment tracking, shipment tracking management reports, returns analysis and returns management reporting. In an exemplary embodiment, the Return System has three major components: 1.) A Returns Manager Subsystem that provides a user interface to each Merchant to setup the Merchant's account, setup the Merchant's return policy and rules, and to monitor the status and movement of return shipments; 2.) A Consumer Returns Subsystem (also sometimes referred to as a "Customer Returns Subsystem") that provides each consumer using the Returns System with an online user interface that leads the consumer through the returns process, displays the return policies and rules to the consumer, provides shipping document to ship the return package if appropriate, and permits the consumer to track their return shipments; and 3.) a Returns Processing Subsystem that, in the exemplary embodiment, provides background shipping and tracking functionality. In one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the Online Merchant integrates the Merchant's online system with the Returns Processing Subsystem. In another exemplary embodiment, the Returns Processing Subsystem is provided as an independent web-based application service (referred to as a "Return

Merchant Service System") operated by a common provider. In such an embodiment, the Merchant's system interacts with the Return Merchant Service System through Application Program Interfaces ("API").

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Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (8): [0008] After authorizing a return, the online merchant mails out an Authorized Return Service label, such as a UPS Authorized Return Service label. This return authorization process results in a slow return and refund or exchange.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (12): [0012] The various methods mentioned above of providing returns and exchange services are inefficient for both the merchant and the returning consumer. Processing return and exchange requests by telephone requires the online merchant to provide expensive facilities, staff, and training. Furthermore, a customer service call center cannot match the convenience of the Internet for an online shopper. Return requests by email, telephone, and paper forms are collected with manual processes and/or in non-standard formats. This makes generating returns reports an expensive data-collection chore which is subject to the judgment of individual customer service reps.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (24): [0023] Among the returns policy options available through the System, customers can be issued an immediate, automated return authorization. Other returns policy options allow each online store to specify whether or not shipping charges are to be paid by the store or by the customer. The System further provides customers with the ability to print a return shipping label on a printer attached to the customer's personal computer directly from the online store.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (31): [0030] A Return Merchant Service System component of the computer System embodying the present invention interfaces and interacts with a Merchant's system to provide each subscribing eCommerce Merchant with various shipment management functions through Application Program Interfaces ("API") and web-based user Merchant interfaces, including but not limited to: shipment rating, shipment labeling, shipment tracking, shipment tracking management reports, returns analysis and returns management reporting. The present invention provides each Merchant's customers with pricing of shipping rates for various shipping options, processing of returns requests, printing of shipping, returns, or traveler labels at the customer's own laser printer, and tracking of each return shipment.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (91): [0120] FIG. 75a is a graphic representation depicting an exemplary United States Parcel Service Electronic Merchandise Return label in an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (92): [0121] FIG. 75b is a graphic representation depicting exemplary instructions describing how to print and use an

exemplary United States Parcel Service Electronic Merchandise Return label in an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (128): [0251] FIG. 23c is a high level interactivity diagram depicting an exemplary embodiment of the interactivity of the Customer Returns Subsystem between a Consumer's Client Machine, Customer Returns Page, various Customer Returns Subsystem functions, and the Return System servers in an exemplary embodiment of the invention. As depicted in FIG. 23c, a portion of the Consumer Returns Subsystem 901 operates on the Consumer's (also referred to here as the Customer) Client Machine 900. When the Consumer accesses the Merchant's online store, the Merchant's menu options allow the Consumer to access the Consumer Returns Page 902 from within the Merchant's online store. From the Consumer Returns Page, the Consumer can access the Consumer Returns functions such as, for example: Display of the Merchant's Standard Policy and display items available for return 903 from the Standard Policy data 754; prompt the Consumer for the reason for the return 904; prompt the Consumer for shipping information such as the carrier with which the package will be returned and the packaging of the item 905; finalize shipping of package 906; and print a shipping label 907 saving the shipping label information, such as the tracking number, in a Return Label database 908. As with the Returns Manager Subsystem, the Consumer Returns Subsystem uses the Return System's web servers 21m-21r to interact with the Consumer, and uses the Return System's Database servers 20a-20n to access the various databases in the Policy Database 800 that are needed to supply the information for the interactivity.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (130): [0253] As depicted in FIG. 20c, according to the Merchant's Return Policy, if the Consumer's Return Reason is "justified", then the Return System authorizes the return 369 (and according to the Merchant's Return Policy, pays for the Return Shipping), calculating a Refund Amount and allowing the Consumer to Launch a Label 370, Print a Shipping Label 371; the Return System thanks the Consumer 372 and Prepares a Package Return Shipped e-mail 373.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (133): [0256] Continuing with FIG. 25, the Return Summary Screen prompts the Consumer to select one of the Merchant's choices of Carriers 187-1, 188-1, 190 and 184. The Return Summary Screen also prompts the Consumer to indicate whether 433 or not 434 the returned item is in its original packaging 432. By pressing the onscreen "Next Step>>" button 422, the Return System displays a Label Create Screen.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (134): [0257] FIG. 26 is a graphic representation depicting an exemplary Label Create Screen in an exemplary embodiment of the invention. The exemplary Label Create Screen depicted in FIG. 26 notifies the Consumer that the Return Package is ready to be shipped 440 and instructs the Consumer how to create a shipping label for the package 441 according to the Carrier selected by the Consumer (431 in FIG. 25).

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (135): [0258] If the Consumer presses the onscreen "Next Step>>" button 422 on the Label Create Screen, the Return System prepares a Carrier shipping tracking number 450 and an internal Return System tracking number (see 803, FIG. 23b) for the item package. The Return System prepares a shipping label for the item package an exemplary embodiment of which is depicted in FIG. 27a.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (137): [0260] As a result of the Consumer creating a shipping label, the System assigns the package a System package tracking number and adds a record containing all of the pertinent information about the package to the System database 22. Following are exemplary Shipping tracking numbers: MAGGY841VRY50; MAGGY84B496RF; MAGGY84X0FJ45.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (165): [0288] In one embodiment of the invention, instead of printing a shipping label at the Shipper's printer, a Package Number is displayed online on a Package Number Screen with notification that the label will be printed at a shipping location previously designated by the Shipper.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (166): [0289] After the Consumer has printed a shipping label, as depicted in FIG. 28, the Return System then thanks the Consumer 455 and allows the Consumer to either return to the Merchant's Home Page, e.g., 456, or return to the Consumer's Order History 406. The option to return to the Consumer's Order History 406 is an option on most of the Consumer Return System Screens described above (FIGS. 22-26, 28).

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (167): [0290] Once the Consumer has printed a shipping label, the Return System generates a Return Shipped e-mails, one to the Merchant, an exemplary embodiment of which is depicted in FIG. 29, and one to the Consumer, an exemplary embodiment of which is depicted in FIG. 30.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (169): [0292] As depicted in FIGS. 20a through 20c, in order to pay for return shipping, the Return System prompts the Consumer to specify Return Shipping Preferences 366, prepares and displays a Graphic Comparison of the costs of shipping the item with a plurality of Carriers and Services 367, and prompts the Consumer to select and pay for shipping the package according to the Carrier and Service selected 368, before allowing the Consumer to create and print a return shipping label 370-371.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (214): [0337] From the Shipping Summary Screen, the Consumer can create and print a shipping label, as is described elsewhere herein, and the Return System will generate and send thank you messages and e-mails.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (289): [0412] The Return Merchant Service System (sometimes referred to herein as the "iReturn" system) component of the present invention provides a merchandise return computer system that is programmed to, among other things: receive from a second computer system a request to rate

shipment of a particular package by a plurality of carriers; calculate a plurality of shipment rates for shipping a particular package in response to a request to rate shipment received from a second computer system; receive from a second computer system a request to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers and generate a response to the second computer system comprising a status of the request; calculate a shipment rate for shipping a particular package in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers; generate as a response to a second computer system a shipping label for shipping a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers and send the shipping label response to the second computer system; generate as a response to a second computer system a merchandise return label for return shipping of a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a merchandise return label for return shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers and send the merchandise return label response to the second computer system; designate as received a status of a particular return record in a database in response to a request received from a second computer system to identify as received a particular package, wherein the particular return record corresponds to the particular package; obtain in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of a particular package a shipping status for the particular package from a carrier computer system; store in a database a return record corresponding to a particular package in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of the particular package by one of a plurality of carriers; generate a request to rate shipment of a particular package by a plurality of carriers and digitally address the request through a global communications system to a second computer; generate a request to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers and digitally address the request through a global communications system to a second computer; generate a request to prepare a return shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers and digitally address the request through a global communications system to a second computer; generate a request to prepare a merchandise return label for processing shipment of a particular package and digitally address the request through a global communications system to a second computer.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (327): [0450] The iReturn Merchant Service APIs, 4500, 4020 through 4023, and 4050, access the iReturn Database 4028 in response to received API requests, and prepare API responses according to a set of rules specific to each API, and with information retrieved from the iReturn Database 4028. The iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 provides, for example, four APIs, according to a set of rules specific to each API, and with information retrieved from the iReturn Database 4028. The iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 provides, for example, four APIs, each of which will be described in more detail below: Return Product 4020, Receive Product 4021, Label Package 4023, and Price It 4022. The Label Package API 4023 processes requests to print shipping labels and in response to such requests, accesses a Location Database 4026 and the iReturn Database 4028 to

obtain information with which to print shipping labels, e.g., USPS Return labels 4024, and UPS Return Labels 4025.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (356): [0479] In the exemplary embodiment, each Pending status has a meaning as follows: a.) Future: label is printed for a particular package, but package will not be shipped until the following day or beyond; b.) Saved: incomplete information has been input for a particular package of group of packages and no label has been printed; c.) Prepared: a shipping label has been printed for a particular package, the package is scheduled to be shipped by the end of the current date, but end of day processing has not yet been performed; and d.) All: reports all records regardless of status.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (364): [0487] In the exemplary embodiment, each Inbound status has a meaning as follows: a.) Shipped; a shipping label has been printed, and end of day processing has been performed for the package; b.) In-Transit: the relevant carrier has picked up the particular package and scan data is available; c.) Delivered: the carrier has reported that the package has been delivered; d.) Received: the destination point has reported physical receipt of the particular package; e.) Exception: the relevant carrier reports delivery problems for the particular package; and f) All: reports all records, regardless of status.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (406): [0529] The iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 then uses the information contained in the Return It API request to prepare a Return It API Response which contains labeling instructions 4411 with which the Customer can print an appropriate type of label with which to facilitate the shipping of the item to be returned using the Customer-selected carrier and service; the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 sends the Return It API Response to the Merchant's Return Policy Engine which in turn displays information provided in the Return It API Response to the customer 4412.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (407): [0530] After printing the shipping label for the item to be returned, the Customer can request tracking information 4413. From the Customer's tracking request, the Merchant's System 4001 prepares a Track It API Request 4414 which it sends to the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (409): [0532] Once the Merchant, such as one of the Merchant's Warehouses, has received the returned package, the Merchant acknowledges 4417 to the Merchant's System 4001a, which in turn acknowledges in the form of a Return Received API request 4418 to the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000, receipt of the returned package. In the exemplary embodiment depicted in FIG. 70, the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 acknowledges receipt of the returned item 4419 at which point, the Merchant's System 4001a credits the Customer's Credit Card Company 4421 account for the returned item (less the shipping charges) 4420. The Merchant's System 4001a then displays for the Customer a credit for the returned item less shipping charges 4422.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (410): [0533] FIG. 71 is a high level interactivity diagram depicting exemplary interactivity by a Customer with a Merchant's system and between the Merchant's system 4001 and the iReturn Merchant Service Servers 20a-20n and 21a-21z in the iReturn System 4000 in a situation where the Merchant pays shipping charges in an exemplary embodiment of the invention. The interactivity depicted in FIG. 71 is similar to that depicted in FIG. 70 except that because the Customer does not pay for shipping charges, the Merchant's system 4001 does not send the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 Price It API Requests 4406 (FIG. 70) and the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 does not send the Merchant's system 4001 Price It API Responses 4007. As depicted in FIG. 71, once the Merchant, such as one of the Merchant's Warehouses, has received the returned package, the Merchant acknowledges 4417 to the Merchant's System 4001 a, which in turn acknowledges in the form of a Return Received API request 4418 to the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000, receipt of the returned package. In the exemplary embodiment depicted in FIG. 71, the iReturn Merchant Service System 4000 acknowledges receipt of the returned item 4419 at which point, the Merchant's System 4001 a credits the Customer's Credit Card Company 4421 account for the returned item 4420. The Merchant's System 4001 a then displays for the Customer a credit for the returned item 4422.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (415): [0538] FIG. 73 is a high level structural diagram depicting the structural components of an API Request in an exemplary embodiment of the invention. As depicted in FIG. 73, each API Request 4510 comprises a User Name 4511 associated with the Merchant's account, a Password 4512, a Version Number 4513 that identifies the particular software version under which the API Request is generated, a Request Type 4514 (Return Product, Receive Product, or Label Product), and a Request Information Block 4530. The Request Information Block can comprise either, Ship Data 4515, Shipping Request Data 4516, Void Package Data 4517, Receive Package Data 4518, or Label Package Data 4519. In the exemplary embodiment, only one type, and only one instance of that type, of information block is allowed for each API Request.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (416): [0539] FIG. 74 is a high level structural diagram depicting the structural components of an API Response in an exemplary embodiment of the invention. As depicted in FIG. 74, each API Response 4520 comprises a Status 4521, a User Name 4511 associated with the Merchant's account, a Version Number 4513 that identifies the particular software version under which the API Response is generated, a Response Type 4522 (Return Product, Receive Product, or Label Product), and a Response Information Block 4531. The Response Information Block can comprise either, Ship Data 4515, Shipping Request Data 4516, Void Package Data 4517, Receive Package Data 4518, or Label Package Data 4519.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (430): [0553] In the exemplary embodiment, the physical number of Return Package blocks must match the `Number of Return Package Requests` value. In the exemplary embodiment, each Return Package Block comprises a Returns Record key, a Label type, a Label Image type, a Carrier Identifier, at least

one (but may have many) Package Block, and each Package Block must have at least one (but may have many) Product Block. The elements comprising a Returns Record key, a Label type, a Label Image type, a Carrier Identifier, a Package Block, and a Product Block are disclosed below.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (435): [0558] Label Type is optional. Valid Label Types include: None (which means that no label is requested at this time); Shipping label (a shipping label for the specified carrier); Traveler label (a Traveler label is provided to a person who desires to take the package to a retail shipping location. a description of a Traveler label is provided in more detail below); and Returns Label.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (441): [0564] A Carrier Identifier ("ID") is required if the Label Type specified is equal to Shipping or Returns. Valid Carrier Identifiers are linked to Label Types. If the Label Type is equal to Returns, then the Label format will be either USPS return label format or UPS ARS label format.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (442): [0565] Error Conditions that may be reported with respect to Carrier Identifier include: "Carrier ID Required"--this error is reported if the Label Type is specified to be Shipping or Returns and no Carrier ID has been provided; "Invalid Value-Carrier ID for this Label Type-[Carrier Id value, Label type value]"--this error is reported if the Carrier ID provided is not supported or is not supported for the requested Label Type value provided (the system will report the invalid Carrier ID values and Label type values in the Error message text).

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (475): [0598] Carrier Information includes: CarrierAccount (required); CarrierId or CarrierName (required; Valid Carrier ids are linked to Label type; for Label type=Returns: USPS return label format and UPS ARS label format are valid); CarrierServiceId or CarrierServiceName (required). Error Conditions reported with respect to Carrier Information include: "Carrier Required"--this error is returned if a Carrier is not provided; "Carrier Account Number Required"--this error is returned if a Carrier Account is not provided; "Carrier Service Required"--this error is returned if a Carrier Service is not provided; "Invalid Value-Carrier [Carrier]"--(the system will report the invalid value in the Error Text) this error is returned if the Carrier is not a supported carrier; "Invalid Value-Carrier Account-[Carrier Account]"--(the system will report the invalid value in the Error Text) this error is returned if the Carrier Account is not a valid Carrier Account; "Invalid Value-Service-[Service]"--(the system will report the invalid value in the Error Text) this error is returned if the Service is not a valid for the selected carrier.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (614): [0737] In the exemplary embodiment of the invention, very little data is passed in a Label Package Request API because the assumption is that a Returns record with all of the necessary information already exists. A Label Package Request Node includes the following elements: a Number of Label Package Requests; and one or more Label Package Request blocks.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (624): [0747] Label Type is required. Valid Label types include: Shipping label; Traveler Label; and Returns label. Error Conditions that may be reported include:

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (636): [0759] In the exemplary embodiment of the invention, Carrier ID is Required. Valid Carrier IDs are linked to Label type. For Label type=Returns: USPS return label format and UPS ARS label format are available. Error Conditions that may be reported include:

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (651): [0774] If the carrier is USPS, the iReturn System creates a USPS Electronic Merchandise Return (EMR) label as depicted in FIG. 75a. To do that, the iReturn System generates the EMR in PNG format on a system server.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (656): [0779] If the carrier is UPS, the iReturn System creates a UPS Authorized Return Service (ARS) label (not shown). To do that, the iReturn System generates the ARS in PNG format on a system server. In the exemplary embodiment, the system provides a mechanism by which the Customer provides payment information to UPS.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (661): [0784] The iReturn System provides the ability for a customer to prepare packages for shipping and print what is referred to herein as a "Traveler" Label for use by a retail shipping center, for example, a Mail Boxes Etc. location near the customer. The customer uses the Merchant's Returns Policy Engine and Processing System to interface with the iReturn System to enter package information. Although the iReturn System provides for the printing of actual shipping labels, if, for some reason, the customer is unable or not ready to print a final shipping label, the client prints a temporary label called a Traveler.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (662): [0785] The Traveler displays a bar code that contains the shipping details. When the customer delivers the package to a retail shipping location, the shipping professional scans the bar code and accesses the iReturn System to complete the process and print an actual shipping label. All the package information that the customer previously entered at his or her computer is now readily available to the retail shipping center shipping professional. At this point in time, the shipping professional weighs the package and adjusts the previously-entered weight, if necessary. Other information can be updated as well. The shipping professional then readies the package for the carrier by entering final details, printing out a final shipping label, and processing the package as shipped

Claims Text - CLTX (19): 18. The online merchandise return computer system of claim 17, the computer system further programmed to: generate a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and display the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (57): 56. The method of claim 55, the method further comprising: generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (95): 94. The computer product of claim 93, the computer product having further instructions for: generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (96): 95. The computer product of claim 94, the computer product having further instructions for: generating a set of printable shipping label data in response to a shipping label print request by the consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (133): 132. The computer system of claim 131, the computer system further comprising: a set of instructions for generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and a set of instructions for displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (161): 160. A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to: generate as a response to a second computer system a shipping label for shipping a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

Claims Text - CLTX (163): 162. A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to: generate as a response to a second computer system a merchandise return label for return shipping of a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a merchandise return label for return shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

Claims Text - CLTX (164): 163. The computer system of claim 162, said computer system further programmed to: send the merchandise return label response to the second computer system.

Claims Text - CLTX (169): 168. A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to: generate a request to prepare a return shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers; and insert into the request a digital address of a second computer, said digital address corresponding to a location of said second computer in a global communications network.

Claims Text - CLTX (170): 169. A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to: generate a request to prepare a merchandise return label for processing shipment of a particular package; and insert into the request a digital address of a second computer, said digital address corresponding to a location of said second computer in a global communications network.

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INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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US-CL-CURRENT: 235/385, 235/375

ABSTRACT: A Merchandise Return Label may be printed with a unique number on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the Merchandise Return Label will be considered metered mail. Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

21 Claims, 14 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 14

----- KWIC -----

Abstract Text - ABTX (1): A Merchandise Return Label may be printed with a unique number on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the Merchandise Return Label will be considered metered mail. Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (2): This invention pertains to commercial transactions and, more particularly, to the return of delivered merchandise with verifiable labels.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (6): Typically, the buyer would telephone the seller and inform the seller that the buyer would like to return some or all of the purchased goods. The seller may send the buyer a Merchandise Return Label, tell the buyer to pack the goods that they want to return in the package in which the goods were sent, and affix the aforementioned label to the package. The buyer would have to write the buyer's address on the label.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (7): Current United States Postal Service Regulations regarding Merchandise Return Labels consider that goods mailed with the foregoing labels are "permit mail". Permit mail having the above labels will not be delivered directly to the seller, but will be delivered to the United States Post Office that issued the permit number. Thus, the seller will be inconvenienced by having to pick up the package containing the returned goods at the post office that issued the permit number.

When the package containing the returned goods arrives at the Post Office, a postal employee will have to manually weigh the package; determine the postage that is due; complete the Merchandise Return Label; and receive payment from the permit holder when the permit holder receives the package. The above process is expensive, time-consuming and labor-intensive.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (8): Copending U. S. Patent Application Docket No. F-185 filed herewith entitled "A Method For Returning Merchandise" solves the foregoing problems by providing a new type of Merchandise Return Label that may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the new type of Merchandise Return Label will be considered "metered mail". Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the new type of Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (9): One of the disadvantages of the new Merchandise Return Label is that the Label can be photocopied and used to send many packages to the original sender on the same day that the original label is made. If the label is scanned and graphically edited by changing the date and other elements of the label on the recipient's computer, the recipient may send many packages, on any date, to the original sender without paying for their delivery. An example of a way in which the new Merchandise Return Label may be used is as follows. Mailer A addresses mail piece #1 containing a new Merchandise Return Label to recipient B. Recipient B receives mail piece #1 from mailer A and copies many Merchandise Return Labels addressed to original mailer A. Recipient B may then place a copied Merchandise Return Label on packages that are sent to Mailer A and have the packages delivered by the post without the payment of additional postage. The above procedure may be continued many times without the payment of postage.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (11): This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art by placing a unique number on Merchandise Return Labels so that the Label may not be scanned or photocopied and used more than once.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (12): This invention accomplishes the foregoing by having the seller or shipper of the goods place a label or impression on every package, flat or mail piece that may be delivered with an indicia that is affixed thereto. The package, flat or mail piece (hereinafter "container") may be delivered by the post, a courier, or private delivery service, i.e., Federal Express.RTM., United Parcel Service.RTM., DHL.RTM., Emory.RTM., Airborne.RTM., etc. The label or impression may include the meter number that paid for the delivery of the container, the serial number of the indicia, as well as the weight of the shipped container. Information contained in the label or impression or information stored in the meter will be sent by the meter that paid for the shipment of the container to a data center. If the buyer of the shipped container decides to return the goods in the container to the seller, the buyer may notify the seller or the data center by telephone, facsimile, post, or the internet, of their

intention to return the goods. The seller or the data center may send the buyer information to complete the new Merchandise Return Label (if the Label was contained in the container) by telephone, facsimile, post, or the internet, or send the buyer a completed Merchandise Return Label by facsimile, post, or the internet. The seller's or shipper's meter will be debited for the cost of returning the container. The buyer will enter the information provided by the data center on the new Merchandise Return Label (if the label was contained in the container) and affix the completed label to the container or affix a new label that has been supplied by the data center to the container. Then the buyer will deposit the container containing the returned goods with the Post, a courier, or private delivery service so that the goods in the container may be delivered to the buyer. Prevention of duplicating and/or copying of the unique number on the Merchandise Return Label is enabled by detection of modified indicia on the Merchandise Return Label; the addition of a unique number on the Merchandise Return Label, and searching the Merchandise Return Label and the original label for duplicate entries. The data center will pay the post, courier, or private delivery service the amount debit to the meter for the cost of returning the container. The data center may deduct a service charge or fee for its services in completing the above.

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (2): FIG. 1 is a drawing of a prior art Merchandise Return Label;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (4): FIG. 3A is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 251 that has a replica of an indicia affixed thereto;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (5): FIG. 3B is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 251 that has an information-based indicia affixed thereto;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (9): FIGS. 6A-6C is a flow chart showing the computing of return postage, formatting and printing Label 251; and

Detailed Description Text - DETX (2): Referring now to the drawings in detail, and more particularly to FIG. 1, the reference character 11 represents a Merchandise Return Label. The endorsement 12 "No Postage Necessary If Mailed in the United States" is printed in the upper right corner of label 11. The expression 13 "Merchandise Return Label" is contained in rectangle 14. The permit number 15 of the sender of label 11, the name 16 and location 17 of the post office that issued permit number 15, and the name and address of permit holder 18 are also contained in rectangle 14. The rate of mail is indicated in space 19, the name of the buyer returning the goods will be printed in space 20, and the address of the buyer returning the goods will be printed in space 21 party. The expression 22 "Postage Due Computed By Acceptance Post Office" is printed below space 21. The special service endorsements: postage 23; merchandise return fee 24; delivery insurance fee 25; special handling fee 26; pickup service fee 27; total postage and fees due 28; and insurance desired 29 by permit holder for and spaces 30, are printed on label 11. The name and address 31 of the Postage Due Unit of the permit holder will be printed below rectangle 14. Personnel from the Postage Due Unit will weigh the container (not shown) that label 11 is affixed to and enter the applicable

fees in spaces 30. The entering of fees into spaces 30 is labor-intensive and, consequently, costs the post a great deal of money. Additionally, the container will be held at the Postage Due Unit until the permit holder physically pays for the postage and accepts the container.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (4): FIG. 3A is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 251 that has a replica of an indicia that is attached thereto. The postage for printing label 251 is charged to an account associated with meter 103 (FIG. 4). Label 251 was printed by printer 202 (FIG. 4). The buyer's name and address 61 or the name and address of the person who is returning the goods are printed in the upper left corner of label 251. The name of the entity that computed the postage 75 that is due to deliver the goods that label 251 is affixed to is contained in rectangle 62. The charges: amount of postage 64 to deliver the goods that label 251 is affixed to; merchandise return fee 65; insurance fee 66; delivery confirmation fee 67; special handling fee 68; pick up service fee 69; total postage and fees due 70; and insurance desired by meter holder 72 for (value) \$0, are contained in rectangle 63. Spaces 73 are used by the entity that computed the postage 75 for entering: the amount of postage 64; the merchandise return fee 65; the insurance fee 66; the delivery confirmation fee 67; the special handling fee 68; the pick up service fee 69; the total postage and fees due 70; the insurance desired by meter holder 72. The name and address 76 of the seller or person to whom the goods are being shipped appear in the bottom right of label 251. The postal indicia 77 contains a dollar amount 78 for the total postage and fees due, the date 79 that the postal indicia was affixed to label 251, the zip code 80 of the seller of the returned goods; the zip code 84 of the buyer who is returning the goods; the postal meter serial number 81; and a security code 82. The class of mail 83 that label 251 is going to be affixed to appears in the right corner of label 251. A unique number 252 appears below indicia 77. Number 252 is encrypted and includes the date and time that indicia 54 was printed on label 49 and the weight of container 50 when it was originally sent from Ajax Widget Co. to Mr. J. Homeowner. Bar code 253 appears below number 252. Bar code 253 is a bar code representation of number 252.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (5): FIG. 3B is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 251 that has an Information Based Indicia 90 affixed thereto. Label 251 was printed by printer 202 (FIG. 5), and the postage for printing label 251 was charged to an account associated with meter 103. The buyer's name and address 61 or the name and address of the person who is returning the goods are printed in the upper right corner of label 251. The name of the entity that computed the postage 75 that is due to deliver the goods that label 251 is affixed to is contained in rectangle 62. The charges: amount of postage 64 to deliver the goods that label 251 is affixed to; merchandise return fee 65; insurance fee 66; delivery confirmation fee 67; special handling fee 68; pick up service fee 69; total postage and fees due 70; insurance desired by meter holder 72 for (value) \$0, are contained in rectangle 63. Spaces 73 are used by the entity that computed the postage 75 for entering: the amount of postage 64; the merchandise return fee 65; the insurance fee 66; the delivery confirmation fee 67; the special handling fee 68; the pick up service fee 69; the total postage and fees due 70; the insurance desired by meter holder 72. The name and address 76 of the seller or person to whom the

goods are being shipped appear in the bottom right of label 251. The indicia 90 contains: a dollar amount 93 for the total postage and fees due; the date 94 that indicia 90 was generated; the place 95 of the computer that printed indicia 90; the postal security device serial number 96 or virtual meter number; a FIM code 97; a two-dimensional, encrypted bar code 98; the zip code 91 of the seller who is returning the goods that label 251 is affixed to; and the class of mail 92 to which label 251 is going to be affixed. A unique number 252 appears below indicia 90. Number 252 is encrypted and includes the date and time that indicia 54 was printed on label 49 and the weight of container 50 when it was originally sent from Ajax Widget Co. to Mr. J. Homeowner. Bar code 253 appears below number 252. Bar code 253 is a bar code representation of number 252. It is obvious to one skilled in the art that the information contained in bar code 253 may be incorporated into two-dimensional bar code 98. Delivery confirmation 254 is affixed to label 251.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (9): FIG. 5 is a drawing showing the manner in which goods are returned. After buyer 200 has examined the goods delivered to receive location 230 (FIG. 4) and determined that the goods are going to be returned to seller 100, buyer computer 201 contacts return process 301 via communications link 231. If seller 100 will accept return of the goods, return process 301 will inform buyer 200 to enter postal meter serial number 58 (FIG. 2) and security code 59 into computer 201 so that the above information will be received by return process 301. Process 301 will inform returns and postage computation 302 to use data base 303 to calculate the postage required to mail the goods back to seller 100 and enter the appropriate information in label 251 (FIGS. 3A and 3B). The above information and postage calculated will be stored in actual returned orders data base 303. Return process 301 will download label 251 to buyer computer 201 via communications link 231. Computer 201 will cause printer 202 to print label 251. Buyer 200 will place label 251 over label 49 on container 50 (FIG. 3C) containing the goods that are going to be returned to seller 100 via return 250. Scanner and sorter 263 will scan label 49 and store the information on label 49 in data base 262. Scanner and sorter 263 will scan label 253 and store the information contained in code 253 in data base 262. If the information in code 253 matches the information sent to data base 262, container 50 will be sent to delivery process 226. Delivery process 226 is coupled to return goods process 110. Seller 100 will receive the goods via delivery process 226, and buyer 200 will receive a refund via returned goods process 110. If the information in code 253 does not match the information sent to data base 262, container 50 will be transferred to parcel buffer 261 for further processing, which is hereinafter described in the description of FIGS. 7B-7D. The further processing described in FIGS. 7B-7D will determine whether or not container 50 will be transferred to delivery process 226 or inspect bin 260.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (11): FIGS. 6A-6C is a flow chart showing the computing of return postage, formatting and printing Merchandise Return Label 251. The program starts in block 400 where the buyer logs onto the Metered Returns Data Center 300 (FIG. 5) internet site. Then the program goes to decision block 401. Decision block 401 determines whether or not the buyer has logged onto the Metered

Returns Data Center 300 internet site. If the buyer has not logged onto Metered Returns Data Center 300 internet site, the program goes back to block 401. If the buyer has logged onto the Metered Returns Data Center 300 internet site, the program goes to block 402 to request the buyer to enter code 59 and number 58 from indicia 54 (FIG. 2). Now the program goes to decision block 403 where the buyer enters code 59 and number 58 from indicia 54. Then the program goes to buffer 404 to store code 59 and number 58. In block 405, buffer 404 is read. Then the read record is located in all return orders detailed data base 303. The read record is then sent to block 405 and loaded into buffer 406. Block 407 reads buffer 406 and transmits the read information to block 408 where the buyer verifies the transmitted information, i.e., the buyer confirms his/her name and address, his/her order and the items in his/her order.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (19): Then the program goes to block 529 (FIG. 7C) where the name, address and indicia information on labels 49 and 251 are stored in buffer 529. Now the program goes to block 530 to read the codes in data buffer 529, locate the matching record in data base 303 and load the record into data buffer 531. Then the program goes to block 533 to read the buffers in blocks 529 and 531. Then the program goes to decision block 534. Block 534 determines whether or not the information in buffers 529 and 531 match. If block 534 determines that the information in buffers 529 and 531 match, the program goes to block 540 (FIG. 7D). If block 534 determines that the information in buffers 529 and 531 do not match, the program goes to block 536. Block 536 reads the stored original container true weight and date that indicia 49 was affixed to the container and compares it to the decrypted bar code 253 on Merchandise Return Label 251.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (20): At this juncture, the program goes to decision block 537. Block 537 determines whether or not the stored original container true weight and date that indicia 49 was affixed to the container matches the decrypted portion of bar code 253 on Merchandise Return Label 251 that relates to the stored original container true weight and date that indicia 49 was affixed to the container. If block 537 determines that the above information matches, the program goes to block 538 to prepare a status report where information matches. Then the program goes to block 540 (FIG. 7D). If block 537 determines that the above information does not match, the program goes to block 539 to prepare a status report where the information has been tampered. Then the program goes to block 540 (FIG. 7D). Then the program goes to decision block 541. Decision block 541 determines whether or not the report has been completed. If block 541 determines that the report has not been completed, the program goes back to the input of block 541. If block 541 determines that the report has been completed, the program goes to block 542 to read the container report. Now the program goes to decision block 543. Block 543 determines whether or not the indicia image on labels 49 and 251 were modified. If block 543 determines that the indicia image on labels 49 and 251 was modified, the program goes to block 546 to transfer the container to inspect bin 260 (FIG. 5). Then the program goes to block 501 (FIG. 7A) via blocks 515 and 505. If block 543 determines that the indicia image on labels 49 and 251 was not modified, the program goes to decision block 544. Block 544 determines whether or not the read records from labels 49 and 251 match. If block 544

determines that the records match, the program goes to block 520 to search the carrier data base 262. Then the program goes to decision block 521. Block 521 determines whether or not a duplicate indicia was found in data base 262. If block 521 does not find a duplicate indicia in data base 262, the program goes to block 601 to transfer the container to delivery process 226. Then the program goes to block 501 (FIG. 7A) via blocks 515 and 505. If block 521 finds a duplicate indicia in data base 262, the program goes to block 546 to transfer the container to inspect bin 260 (FIG. 5). Then the program goes to block 501 (FIG. 7A) via blocks 515 and 505. If block 544 determines that the records do not match, the program goes to decision block 545.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (24): The above specification describes a new and improved Merchandise Return Label that contains a unique number. The Merchandise Return Label may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. It is realized that the above description may indicate to those skilled in the art additional ways in which the principles of this invention may be used without departing from the spirit. Therefore, it is intended that this invention be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

Claims Text - CLTX (1): 1. A method for a buyer to return goods to a seller, said method includes the steps of: A) packing buyer ordered goods in a container addressed to the buyer; B) affixing a metered indicia to the container, that identifies the container and its contents, which is charged to a seller's meter for delivery of the container; C) sending information in the indicia, the buyer's address and container contents to one or more data centers; D) delivering the container to the buyer; E) notifying a data center of the buyer's intention to return all or some of the goods in the container; F) forming at the data center a label having a metered indicia that has a unique number that information contained in the indicia that was affixed to the container in step B, wherein the indicia formed at the data center is charged to the seller's meter; G) delivering the label to the buyer; H) affixing the label to the container or affixing the label to a return container containing the goods the buyer is returning to the seller; and I) delivering the container having the returned goods to the seller.

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INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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US-CL-CURRENT: 705/406, 705/404 , 705/408 , 705/410

ABSTRACT: Merchandise Return Label may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the Merchandise Return Label will be considered metered mail. Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

13 Claims, 9 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 9

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Abstract Text - ABTX (1): Merchandise Return Label may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the Merchandise Return Label will be considered metered mail. Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the Post Office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (6): Typically, the buyer would telephone the seller and inform the seller that the buyer would like to return some or all of the purchased goods. The seller may send the buyer a Merchandise Return Label; tell the buyer to pack the goods that they want to return in the package in which the goods were sent; and, affix the aforementioned label to the package. The buyer would have to write the buyer's address on the label.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (7): Current United States Postal Service Regulations regarding Merchandise Return Labels consider that goods mailed with the foregoing labels are "permit mail". Permit mail having the above labels will not be delivered directly to the seller, but will be delivered to the United States post office that issued

the permit number. Thus, the seller will be inconvenienced by having to pick up the package containing the returned goods at the post office that issued the permit number. When the package containing the returned goods arrives at the post office, a postal employee will have to manually weigh the package; determine the postage that is due; complete the Merchandise Return Label and receive payment from the permit holder when the permit holder receives the package. The above process is expensive, time-consuming and labor-intensive.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (9): This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art by providing a new type of Merchandise Return Label that may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. Goods mailed with the new type of Merchandise Return Label will be considered "metered mail". Returned goods may be delivered directly to the buyer, and postal employees will not have to manually complete the new type of Merchandise Return Label. Since the mailing of the returned goods was paid for by a postage meter, the post office would not have to receive payment from the seller when the seller receives the package.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (10): This invention accomplishes the foregoing by having the seller or shipper of the goods place a label or impression on every package, flat or mail piece that may be delivered with an indicia that is affixed thereto. The package, flat or mail piece (hereinafter "container") may be delivered by the post office, a courier, or private delivery service, i.e., Federal Express.RTM., United Parcel Service.RTM., DHL.RTM., Emory.RTM., Airborne,.RTM., etc. The label or impression may include the meter number that paid for the delivery of the container, the serial number of the indicia, as well as the weight of the shipped container. Information contained in the label or impression or information stored in the meter will be sent by the meter that paid for the shipment of the container to a data center. If the buyer of the shipped container decides to return the goods in the container to the seller, the buyer may notify the seller or the data center by telephone, facsimile, post, or the internet, of their intention to return the goods. The seller or the data center may send the buyer information to complete the new Merchandise Return Label (if the label was contained in the container) by telephone, facsimile, post, or the internet, or send the buyer a completed Merchandise Return Label by facsimile, post, or the internet. The seller's or shipper's meter will be debited for the cost of returning the container. The buyer will enter the information provided by the data center on the new Merchandise Return Label (if the label was contained in the container) and affix the completed label to the container or affix a new label that has been supplied by the data center to the container. Then the buyer will deposit the container containing the returned goods with the post, a courier, or private delivery service so that the go, courier, or private delivery service the amount debit to the meter for the cost of returning the container. The data center may deduct a service charge or fee for its services in completing the above.

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (2): FIG. 1 is a drawing of a prior art Merchandise Return Label;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (4): FIG. 3A is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 60 that has a replica of a indicia affixed thereto;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (5): FIG. 3B is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 60 that has a information based indicia affixed thereto;

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (8): FIGS. 6A-6C is a flow chart showing the computing of return postage, formatting and printing Label 60.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (2): Referring now to the drawings in detail, and more particularly to FIG. 1, the reference character 11 represents a Merchandise Return Label. The endorsement 12 "No Postage Necessary If mailed in the United States" is printed in the upper right corner of label 11. The expression 13 "Merchandise Return Label" is contained in rectangle 14. The permit number 15 of the sender of label 11, the name 16 and location 17 of the post office that issued permit number 15, and the permit holder's name and address 18 are also contained in rectangle 14. The name of the buyer returning the goods will be printed in space 20, and the address of the buyer returning the goods will be printed in space 21. The expression 22 "Postage Due Computed By Acceptance Post Office" is printed below space 21. The special service endorsements: postage 23; merchandise return fee 24; delivery insurance fee 25, special handling fee 26; pickup service fee 27; total postage and fees due 28; and insurance desired 29 by permit holder for and spaces 30, are printed on label 11. The name and address 31 of the Postage Due Unit of the permit holder will be printed below rectangle 14. Personnel from the Postage Due Unit will weigh the container (not shown) that label 11 is affixed to and enter the applicable fees in spaces 30. The entering of fees into spaces 30 is labor intensive and consequently costs the Post a great deal of money. Additionally, the container will be held at the Postage Due Unit until the permit holder physically pays for the postage and accepts the container.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (4): FIG. 3A is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 60 that has a replica of an indicia that is attached thereto. The postage for printing label 60 is charged to an account associated with meter 103 (FIG. 4). Label 60 was printed by printer 202 (FIG. 4). The buyer's name and address 61, or the name and address of the person who is returning the goods, are printed in the upper left corner of label 60. The name of the entity that computed the postage 75 that is due to deliver the goods that label 60 is affixed to is contained in rectangle 62. The charges consisting of: amount of postage 64 to deliver the goods that label 60 is affixed to; merchandise return fee 65; insurance fee 66; delivery confirmation fee 67; special handling fee 68; pick up service fee 69; total postage and fees due 70; insurance desired by meter holder 72 for (value) \$0 are all contained in rectangle 63. Spaces 73 are used by the entity that computed the postage 75 for entering: the amount of postage 64; the merchandise return fee 65; the insurance fee 66; the delivery confirmation fee 67; the special handling fee 68; the pick up service fee 69; the total postage and fees due 70; the insurance desired by meter holder 72. The name and address 76 of the seller or person to whom the goods are being shipped appears in the bottom right of label 60. The postal indicia 77 contains a dollar amount 78 for the total postage and fees due; the

date 79 that the postal indicia was affixed to label 60; the zip code 80 of the seller who is receiving the returned goods that label 60 is affixed to; the zip code 84 of the buyer who is returning the goods the postal meter serial number 81; and a security code 82. The class of mail 83 that label 60 is going to be affixed to appears in the right corner of label 60.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (5): FIG. 3B is a drawing of a new Merchandise Return Label 60 that has an information-based indicia 90 affixed thereto. Label 60 was printed by printer 202 (FIG. 5), and the postage for printing label 60 was charged to an account associated with meter 103. The buyer's name and address 61 or the name and address of the person who is returning the goods are printed in the upper right corner of label 60. The name of the entity that computed the postage 75 that is due to deliver the goods that label 60 is affixed to is contained in rectangle 62. The charges including: amount of postage 64 to deliver the goods that label 60 is affixed to; merchandise return fee 65; insurance fee 66; delivery confirmation fee 67; special handling fee 68; pick up service fee 69; total postage and fees due 70; insurance desired by meter holder 72 for (value) \$0 are contained in rectangle 63. Spaces 73 are used by the entity that computed the postage 75 for entering: the amount of postage 64; the merchandise return fee 65; the insurance fee 66; the delivery confirmation fee 67; the special handling fee 68; the pick up service fee 69; the total postage and fees due 70; the insurance desired by meter holder 72. The name and address 76 of the seller or person to whom the goods are being shipped appear in the bottom right of label 60. The indicia 90 contains: a dollar amount 93 for the total postage and fees due; the date 94 that indicia 90 was generated; the place 95 of the computer that printed indicia 90; the postal security device serial number 96 or virtual meter number; a FIM code 97; a two-dimensional, encrypted bar code 98; the zip code 91 of the seller who is returning the goods that label 60 is affixed to; and the class of mail 92 to which label 60 is going to be affixed.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (8): FIG. 5 is a drawing showing the manner in which goods are returned. After buyer 200 has examined the goods delivered to receive location 230 (FIG. 4) and determined that the goods are going to be returned to seller 100, buyer computer 201 contacts return process 301 via communications link 231. If seller 100 will accept return of the goods, return process 301 will inform buyer 200 to enter postal meter serial number 58 (FIG. 2) and security code 59 into computer 201 so that the above information will be received by return process 301. Process 301 will inform returns and postage computation 302 to use data base 303 to calculate the postage required to mail the goods back to seller 100 and enter the appropriate information in label 60 (FIGS. 3A and 3B). The above information and postage calculated will be stored in actual returned orders data base 303. Return process 301 will download label 60 to buyer computer 201 via communications link 231. Computer 201 will cause printer 202 to print label 60. Buyer 200 will place label 60 on a container containing the goods that are going to be returned to seller 100 via return 250 and delivery process 226. Delivery process 226 is coupled to return goods process 110 and returned goods process 110 is coupled to computer 100. Seller 100 will receive the goods via delivery process 226 and buyer 200 will receive a refund via returned goods process 110.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (10): FIGS. 6A-6C is a flow chart showing the computing of return postage, formatting and printing Merchandise Return Label 60. The program starts in block 400 where the buyer logs onto the Metered Returns Data Center 300 (FIG. 5) internet site. Then the program goes to decision block 401. Decision block 401 determines whether or not the buyer has logged onto the Metered Returns Data Center 300 internet site. If the buyer has not logged onto Metered Returns Data Center 300 internet site, the program goes back to block 401. If the buyer has logged onto Metered Returns Data Center 300 internet site, the program goes to block 402 to request the buyer enter code 59 and number 58 from indicia 54 (FIG. 2). Now the program goes to decision block 403 where the buyer enters code 59 and number 58 from indicia 54. Then the program goes to buffer 404 to store code 59 and number 58. In block 405, buffer 404 is read. Then the read record is located in all return orders detailed data base 303. The read record is then sent to block 405 and loaded into buffer 406. Block 407 reads buffer 406 and transmits the read information to block 408 where the buyer verifies the transmitted information, i.e., the buyer confirms his/her name and address, his/her order and the items in his/her order.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (14): The above specification describes a new and improved Merchandise Return Label that may be printed on a buyer's computer printer and paid for by the seller's postage meter. It is realized that the above description may indicate to those skilled in the art additional ways in which the principles of this invention may be used without departing from the spirit. Therefore, it is intended that this invention be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

Claims Text - CLTX (1): 1. A method for a buyer to return goods to a seller, said method includes the steps of: A) packing buyer ordered goods in a container addressed to the buyer; B) affixing a metered indicia to the container, that identifies the container and its contents, which is charged to a sellers meter account for delivery of the container; C) sending information in the indicia, the buyers address, the sellers meter number and container contents to one or more data centers; D) delivering the container to the buyer; E) notifying a data center of the buyers intention to return all or some of the goods in the container to the seller; F) forming at the data center a label having a metered indicia that is charged to the seller's meter account; G) delivering the label to the buyers address; H) affixing the label to the container or affixing the label to a return container containing the goods the buyer is returning to the seller; and I) delivering the container having the returned goods to the seller.

Other Reference Publication - OREF (3): Unknown author, Returns Online and USPS Form Alliance, Apr. 2001, Direct Marketing, vol. 63 Issue 12, p. 17, 1/2 p.